

foundation and a sound comparison with family laws in the West. Rejecting the Islamic Family Law for its authoritarian nature and for facilitating men's dominance over women, the author calls for a Western-style family legal code that allows equality before the law. Although much can be said about lack of equity in the Islamic legal codes, it is inaccurate to downgrade the instability and crisis that Western family laws and practices have brought about in western societies. Most Western family laws have, in fact, undermined the role of the family and the interests of the children while they have failed to bring about genuine and meaningful gender equality. Furthermore, Western family laws are culturally incompatible with the Muslim societies.

The book pays only scant attention to the different characteristics of Muslim societies that are at different levels of development. No attention has been paid to the role of class distinction as a factor affecting women in these societies. It is increasingly apparent that as Muslim societies develop economically, socially, and politically, the role of women and their legal status change. Clearly, Lebanese, Syrian, and Iraqi women have greater rights than their counterparts in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the Sheikdoms. The solution, however, is not a Western-style feminist movement in these conservative Arab countries, as Makdisi's essay seems to suggest.

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ERRATA

In the December, 1997 issue (Vol. 39, No. 2), author Stewart M. Hoover's first name was misspelled on the front cover listing and on the p. 99 listing. The article itself (p. 153) has the correct spelling. The editor regrets the error.

DPJ

